Page 5, replace paragraph 1, corresponding to page 5, lines 4-7 as follows:

This and other objects are attained by a drive circuit having the features of patent claim 1, and by a method for operating an LED array having the features of patent claim 17.

Page 5, replace paragraph 2, corresponding to page 5, lines 9-32 as follows:

The point of departure is a patent application of the present applicant entitled "Ansteuerschaltung für LED und zugehöriges Betriebsverfahren" ["Drive circuit for LEDs and associated method of operation"] (application No. DE19950135.1; Biebl), in the case of which a plurality of LED clusters are operated in a cascade arrangement. In this case, a higher-level LED cluster is denoted as master cluster, and its average current is fed to a control loop, the drive signal of the master cluster also being used to drive a plurality of lower-level LED clusters, what are termed slave clusters. Starting from the teaching of the application just mentioned, the above object of the invention can be achieved when the total current through all the slave clusters is measured and this current is compared against a prescribable desired value. No fault message is generated as long as the total current lies above the threshold value despite failure of individual slave clusters. A fault signal is not generated until the prescribed threshold value is undershot, which is the same as saying, for example, that the diminished luminance now no longer corresponds to the statutory stipulations.